

# 2018 Communities that Care Youth® Survey

## Summary of Highlights · Tompkins County

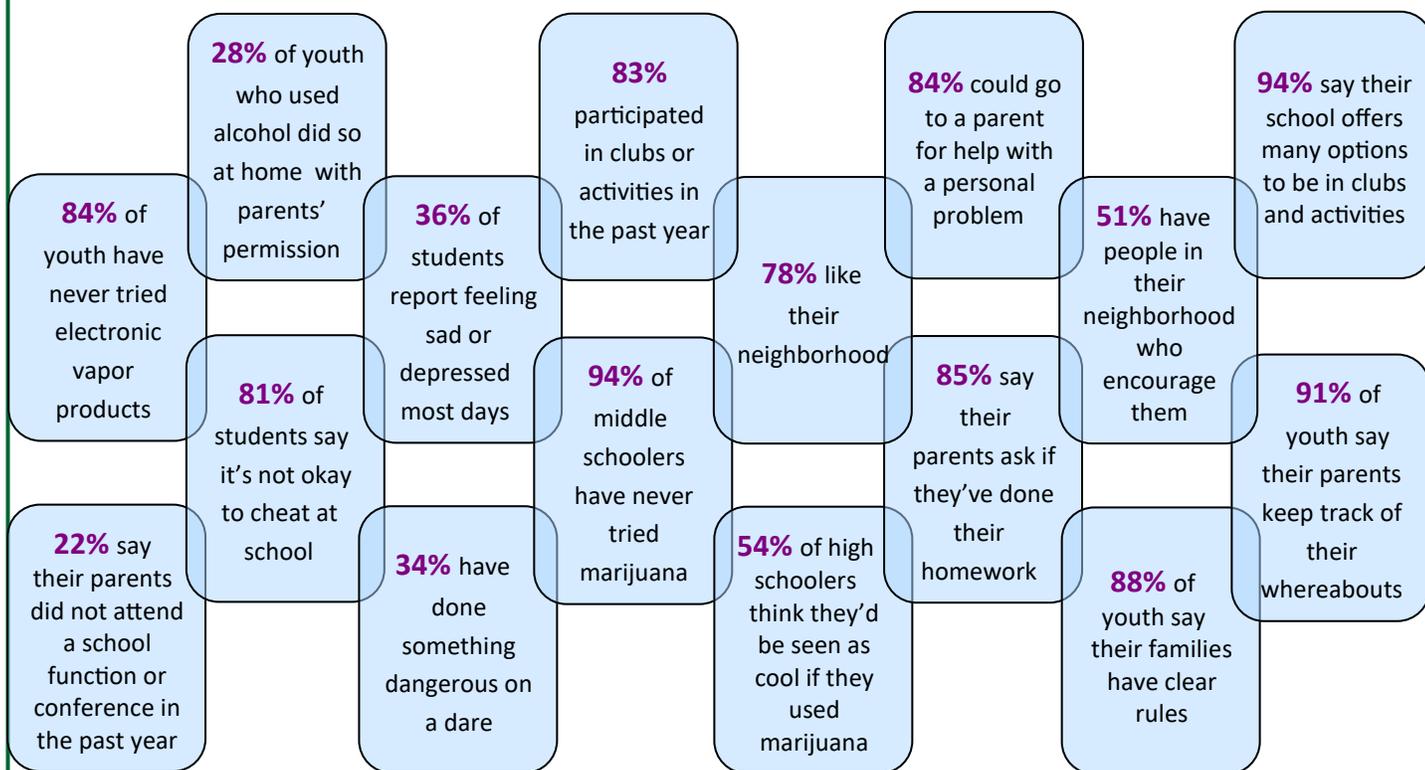
### Spring 2019

Community Coalition for Healthy Youth [www.healthyyouth.org](http://www.healthyyouth.org)

Tompkins County Youth Services Dept. [www.tompkinscountyny.gov/youth](http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/youth)

In Fall 2018, 3,703 students in grades 7-12 in fifteen Tompkins County public schools completed the Communities that Care® Youth Survey. This represents a response rate of 79%. For most schools, this was the sixth time they participated in the biennial survey, allowing for time-trend analysis since 2008.

There is good news in terms of how well our Tompkins County young people are doing. In a majority of areas, we noted improvement from two years ago, but there is always room for further improvement. We hope this report will provide you with some answers about how well our young people are doing and will also spur you to ask yourself, “What can I do to make a difference?”



This report compares responses of Tompkins youth with those of national peers when national data are available. Survey results are used in each district and at the county level to guide school and community efforts to improve outcomes for youth. See notes on P. 5 for definitions. The 2018 Tompkins County Survey Report lists all questions and combined answers of all students. The Report is on file with Tompkins County Youth Services Dept. and TST BOCES. Each school superintendent and building principal has a copy of their district/building results.

The survey was a joint effort of the Community Coalition for Healthy Youth, TST BOCES, Alcohol & Drug Council of Tompkins County, Tompkins County Youth Services Department, and Dryden, Groton, Ithaca, Lansing, Newfield, and Trumansburg school districts and New Roots Charter School. We thank the principals and superintendents for their support and participation in the survey and the students who took the time and effort to share their experiences with us.



## RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTOR FRAMEWORK

To prevent a problem from happening, we need to identify the factors that increase the risk of that problem developing and then find ways to reduce the risks. Just as eating a high-fat diet is a risk factor for heart disease and getting regular exercise is a protective factor for heart disease, there are characteristics of the community, school, family, peer groups and individual youth that can help protect youth (protective factors), or put them at risk (risk factors) for drug use and other problem behaviors including delinquency, teen pregnancy, violence, and school drop-out.

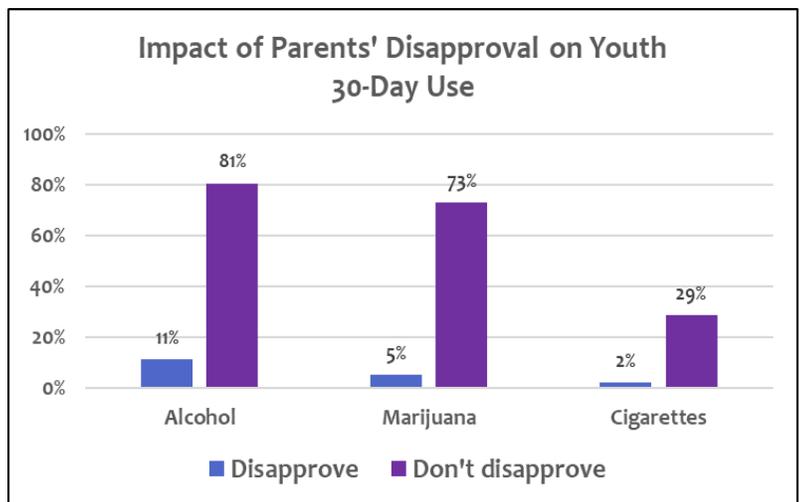
The survey and this report examine data in each domain (family, school, community, individual/peer) to see where Tompkins youth are doing well and where there is room for improvement. Three (3) risk areas in Tompkins County were slightly higher than the national norm in 2018: Low Neighborhood Attachment, Community Transitions and Mobility, and Low Commitment to School. (In 2016, only one area was higher than the national norm.)

**FAMILY** – All risk and protective factors are better than the national norm and have remained stable since 2016. Most Tompkins youth say their parents value and involve them in family life. Their parents provide clear expectations, monitor their behavior, and encourage and praise them.

*Youth with opportunities to participate meaningfully in the responsibilities and activities of caring families that set clear expectations are less likely to engage in negative behaviors.*

### Tompkins Students and their Families

Scores in the Family domain are consistently strong, showing that, overall, Tompkins youth have healthy bonds to their family. Though these connections weaken as students get older, even in 12th grade a majority report that they feel close to their parents, enjoy spending time with them, and could go to them if they needed help. By late high school, however, a majority of youth report poor parental supervision, lack of follow through on family rules, and low parental disapproval of substance use.



**Parental disapproval reduces the likelihood that young people will use alcohol, marijuana, or other drugs.**

Here's what Tompkins youth say about their relationships with their parents:

- 89%** enjoy spending time with their mother
- 85%** feel close to their mother
- 83%** enjoy spending time with their father
- 79%** say their parents give them many chances to do fun things with them
- 73%** feel close to their father
- 71%** say their parents often say they're proud of something they've done
- 69%** report their parents involve them before family decisions affecting them are made

Parental involvement at school has decreased since 2016. Involvement also decreases as students get older. 80% of 7th graders report that their parents had met with someone at school or attended a school function in the past year; by 12th grade 78% report parental participation at school.

How Parent Involvement at School Impacts Youth Outcomes		
Parental Involvement	Yes	No
<b>How Students Respond</b>		
Like school	46%	34%
Get mostly A's & B's	88%	77%
Alcohol use	15%	18%
Marijuana use	13%	15%
Cigarette use	3%	5%
Sad/depressed most days	34%	43%

**Parental involvement at school has positive impacts at school and in other areas of a young person's life.**

**SCHOOL** – While Tompkins County youth score higher than the national average in some protective and risk factors, there are others that are lower than the national average. A majority of Tompkins youth say that they have opportunities to be a part of important activities at school, yet the perceived school rewards for involvement are lower than the national average. Additionally, a majority of youth are meeting academic expectations, yet score higher than average in low commitment to school.

*When young people like school, participate meaningfully in activities, and are recognized for their hard work and achievement, they are less likely to engage in drug use and other problem behaviors.*

### Tompkins Students' School Life

**In 2018, students reported these positives...**

**... and these areas for improvement**

**96%** of students report getting C's or better in school

**36%** say the school notifies their parents when they've done something well

**83%** usually try to do their best work at school

**35%** of students say school rules are fairly enforced

**82%** have many chances to talk 1-on-1 with teachers

**29%** report that students treat each other with respect

**79%** say they feel safe at school

**29%** say they often/almost always hate being in school

**68%** report that teachers notice when they're doing a good job and let them know about it

**26%** say their courses are dull

**51%** have lots of chances to decide things like class rules and activities

**25%** have been called names or experienced verbal put-downs at school in the past month

**51%** have an adult at school who can help them with problems

**12%** of high school students say they have been high or drunk at school in the past year

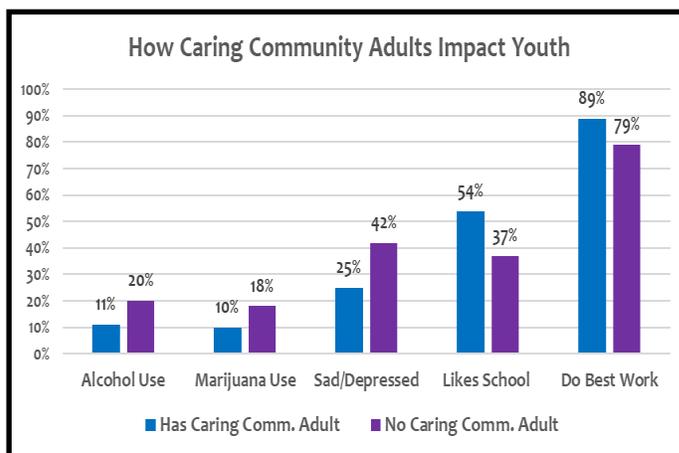
**COMMUNITY** – The highest (worst) identified risk factor, Community Transitions and Mobility, is in this domain and has remained consistent over the years. A majority of Tompkins youth say there are many opportunities to be involved in community activities. However, they report frequent transitions and moves, contributing to a low sense of attachment to their neighborhoods and low levels of recognition by their neighbors when they do well.

*When young people have opportunities for positive participation in their community and the community supports and recognizes them for their involvement, youth are less likely to engage in substance use or other problem behaviors.*

### Tompkins Students and their Community

Ease of Access to Substances		
	M.S.	H.S.
Alcohol	18%	42%
Cigarettes	14%	25%
Marijuana	13%	52%

Perceived drug availability has increased since 2016 for both middle and high schoolers but is lower than national average. Perceived drug availability is highest for 11th & 12th grade; over half of high schoolers say it would be easy to get marijuana if they wanted.



Other findings about Tompkins youth and their community:

**87%** feel safe in their neighborhood

**73%** would miss their neighborhood if they had to move

**12%** of high school students have changed homes 5 or more times since kindergarten

**Youth who have community adults who care about them and recognize their efforts do better in school and life.**

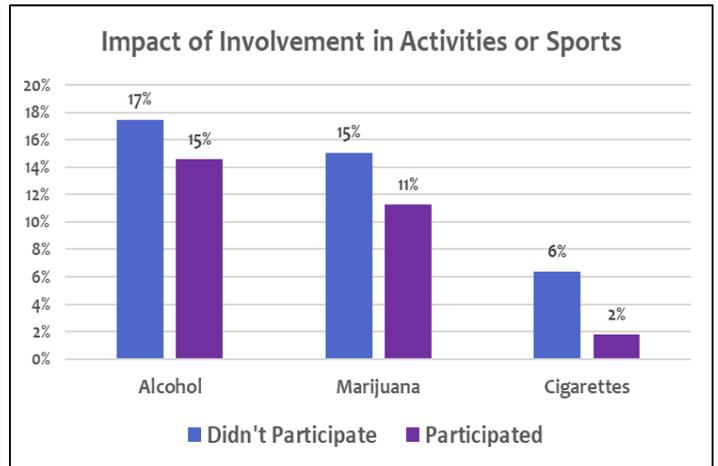
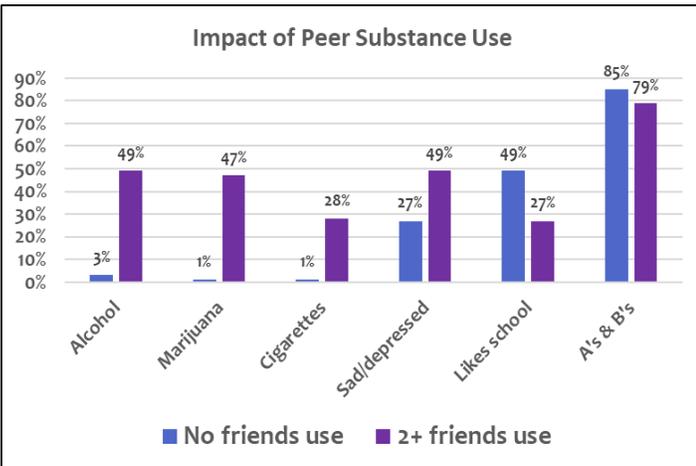
**INDIVIDUAL/PEER** – Most risk and protective factors are better than the national norm.

A majority of Tompkins youth are socially competent and have positive relationships with peers. They also have clear beliefs about what is right and wrong. Tompkins youth are less likely to attend regular religious services than national peers.

*Participation in positive school and community activities helps provide protection for young people. These opportunities also build social skills, including skills to resist negative influences. The influence of peers increases as youth get older; positive peers lead to more strengths in youth while negative peers can have the opposite effect.*

### Tompkins Students and their Peers

**Substance Use** (Details, Page 5) **Alcohol** remains the substance most commonly used by Tompkins youth. Use rates for all grades decreased since 2014, mirroring the national trend. Ten percent (10%) of local high schoolers report binge drinking in the previous two weeks. The second most commonly used substance is **marijuana**; Tompkins 12th graders report higher use rates than national peers. Twelve percent (12%) of Tompkins County high school students report having been drunk or high at school at least once during the past year.



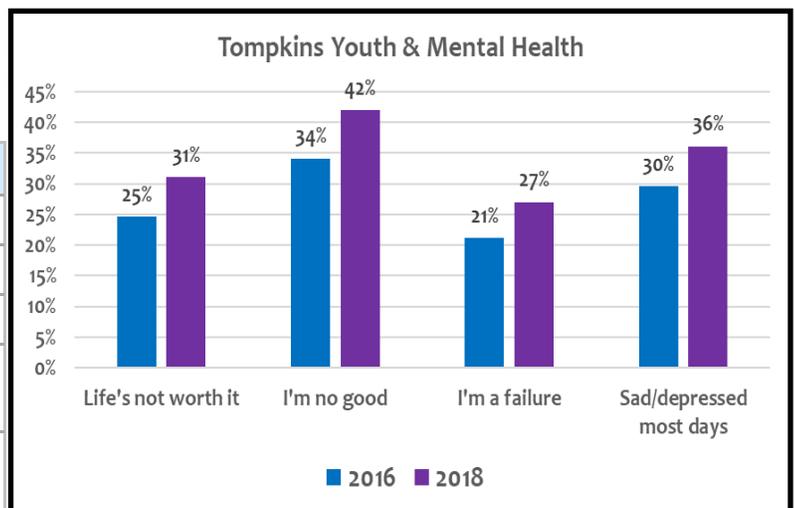
**Peer Influence** Being involved with peers who use either alcohol or marijuana greatly increases the likelihood that a young person will also use. Also, having friends who use increases a young person’s incidence of being sad or depressed and reduces their positive connections at school (see chart, above left). Students who used alcohol most often got it from a friend (28%) or at home with their parents’ permission (28%).

**Participation in Extracurricular Activities** 83% of Tompkins students say they participated in activities or clubs sponsored either at school or in the community in the past year. 75% participated in sports, either at school or in the community. Participation improves outcomes for youth as shown in chart, above right.

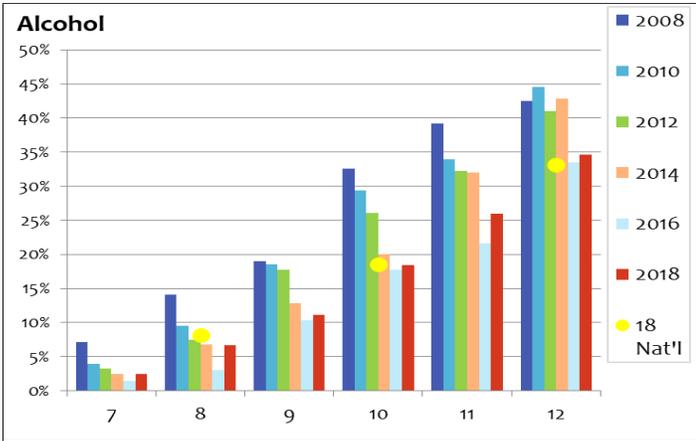
**Mental Health** Since 2016, rates increased for students who reported feeling sad or depressed, in addition to the measures below. All have seen significant increases since 2016.

Mental Health	M.S.	H.S.
Sometimes I think life isn’t worth it	26%	33%
At times I think I’m no good at all	37%	44%
I think I’m a failure	25%	28%
In the past year I felt sad or depressed	33%	38%

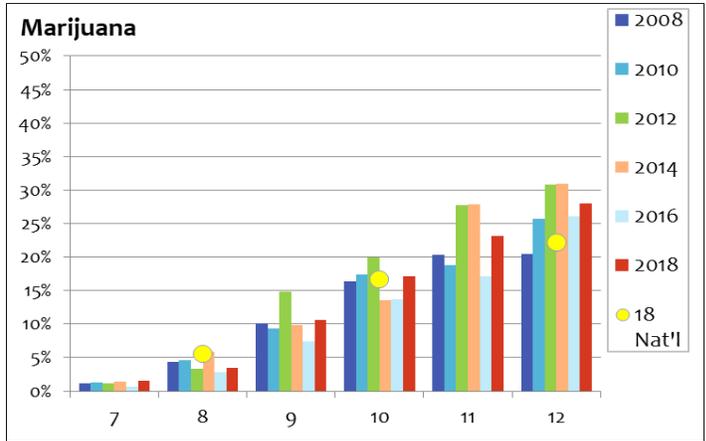
Nationally, 29% of high school students report feeling sad



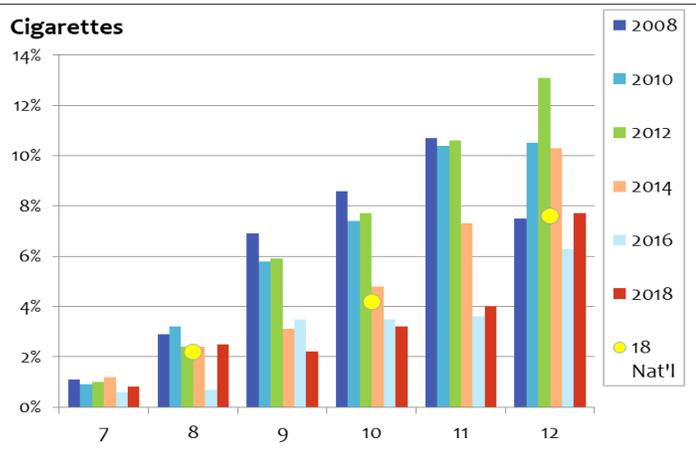
## TOMPKINS COUNTY TIME TRENDS: CURRENT (PAST 30-DAY) SUBSTANCE USE BY GRADE



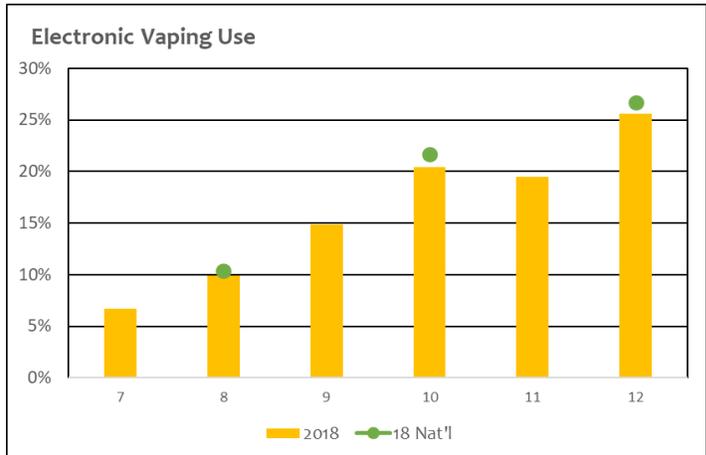
Tompkins youth **alcohol** use has increased slightly from 2016 for all grades. Use by area 12th graders is also slightly higher than national peers.



**Marijuana** use rates have increased since 2016 in all grades. Use amongst 12th graders in Tompkins County is higher than the national rates



**Cigarette** use by Tompkins youth is generally below national peer rates, except for 12 graders. Use increased amongst 8th graders, 11th graders, and 12th graders since 2016.



The 2018 survey had the first question related to 30 day use of **electronic vapor products**. 25% of 12th graders report use, and all grades report use close to the national peer rates.

## TOMPKINS COUNTY TIME TRENDS: AGE OF FIRST USE (GRADES 7-12)

	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018
<b>Alcohol</b>	13.3	13.1	13.3	13.3	13.5
<b>Marijuana</b>	13.9	13.8	13.8	13.9	13.8
<b>Cigarettes</b>	13.0	13.1	12.9	12.9	12.8

Onset of drug use before age 15 is a consistent predictor of drug abuse, and a later age of first drug use has been shown to predict lower drug involvement. Age of first use for Tompkins youth has remained fairly steady for marijuana since 2010, but has increased slightly for alcohol and decreased slightly for cigarettes.

**Notes:**

**National (Nat'l):** Refers to the Monitoring the Future survey given annually to a national sample of 50,000 students in grades 8, 10, and 12. Exception: national youth depression comparison is from the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, a survey of students in grades 9-12, conducted annually by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

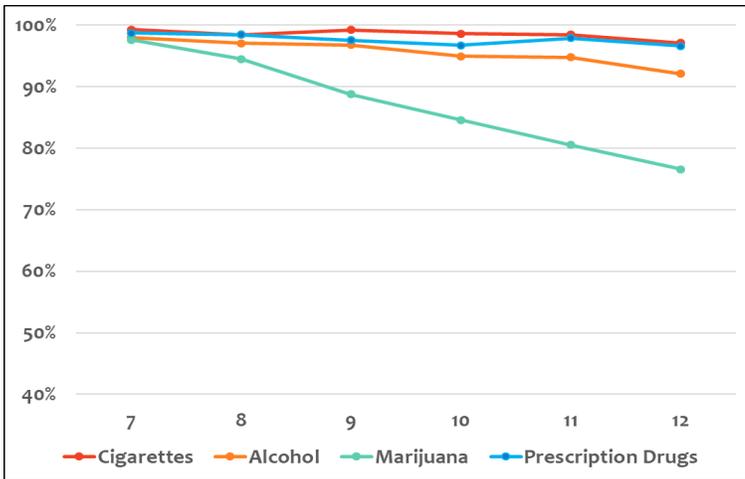
**Current Use:** Use within the past 30 days.

**Regular Use:** Cigarettes: smoke one or more packs per week; Alcohol: one or more alcoholic drinks nearly every day; Marijuana: not specified.

**Participating Schools:** Dryden Middle and High School; Groton Middle and High School; Ithaca's Boynton and DeWitt Middle Schools, Lehman Alternative Community School and Ithaca High School; Lansing Middle and High School; Newfield Middle and High School, Trumansburg Middle and High School; New Roots Charter School. MS refers to students in grades 7 and 8; HS refers to students in grades 9-12.

**Research references** are drawn from Pride Surveys, Communities that Care®, Monitoring the Future, and Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System.

## TOMPKINS STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF PARENTAL DISAPPROVAL\* OF SUBSTANCE USE BY GRADE

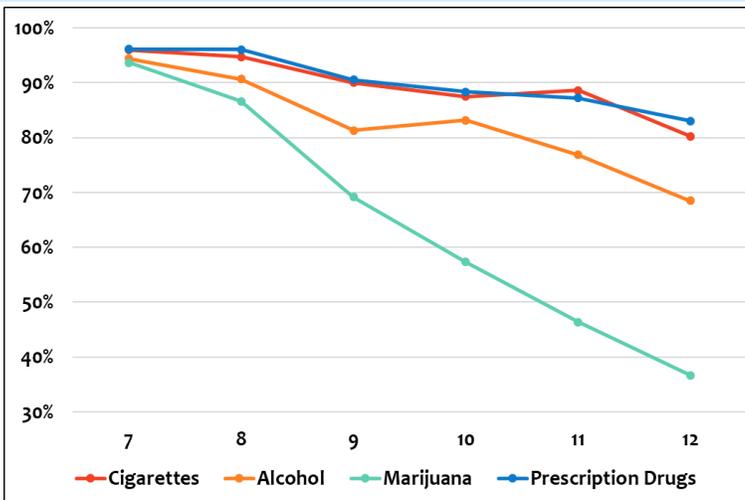


Students who believe their parents would disapprove if they used substances are significantly less likely to use than young people whose parents do not disapprove. In families where parents are tolerant of their children's substance use, young people have increased risk of use.

Perceived parental disapproval is above 90% for all grades for alcohol, cigarettes, and prescription drugs. However, disapproval of marijuana use dips below 90% starting in 9th grade and drops to 77% in 12th grade. Since 2016, perceived parental disapproval of marijuana use decreased for grades 9-12.

\*Wrong or Very Wrong

## TOMPKINS STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF FRIENDS' DISAPPROVAL\* OF SUBSTANCE USE BY GRADE

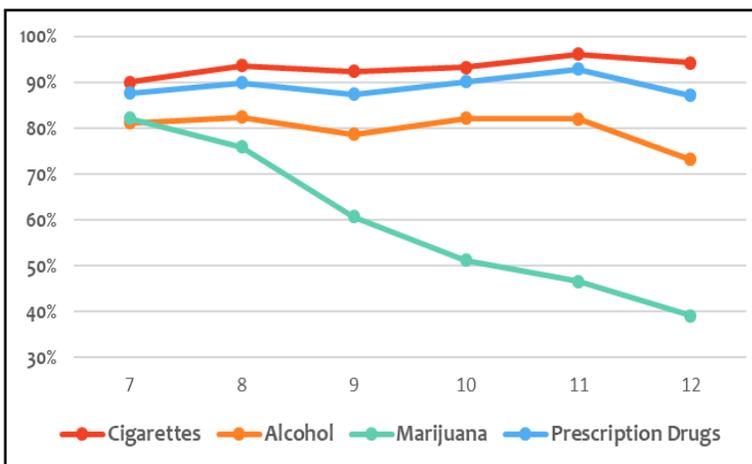


Peer drug use has consistently been found to be among the strongest predictors of substance use among youth. Even when young people do not experience other risk factors, spending time with friends who use drugs greatly increases the risk of this problem developing.

Since 2016, more students in all grades say their friends would disapprove of all regular substance use, except marijuana. Additionally, as displayed in the chart to the left, students' perception of friends' disapproval of marijuana sharply declines after 8th grade.

\*Wrong or Very Wrong

## TOMPKINS STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF HARM\*\* FROM REGULAR SUBSTANCE USE BY GRADE



When drugs are perceived as less harmful, the likelihood of use increases. On the other hand, when perceived risk of harm is high, reported use is low.

Students in all grades reported cigarettes as the most harmful substance, followed by prescription drugs. Perception of harm remains high for both of these substances through high school.

Perception of harm from regular alcohol use dips slightly from 7th (81%) to 12th (73%) grade.

In contrast, perception of harm from regular marijuana use plummets after 8th grade. By 12th grade, only 39% of students believe regular marijuana use is harmful.

\*\*Moderate or great harm from regular use

For more information contact the Community Coalition for Healthy Youth

c/o Tompkins County Youth Services Dept., 320 W. ML King Jr. (State) St., Ithaca, NY 14850 (607) 274-5310 or [www.healthyouth.org](http://www.healthyouth.org)